Welcome to the Smithsonian

The Smithsonian was established in 1846 with funds bequeathed to the United States by James Smithson, an English scientist, “for the increase and diffusion of knowledge.”

When you visit the Smithsonian today, you’re entering the world’s largest museum complex, with 19 museums and the National Zoo, holding approximately 155 million artifacts and specimens in trust for the American people. Ten museums are located along the National Mall, six others and the Smithsonian’s National Zoo are nearby, and two more are in New York City. The Smithsonian Castle and the Arts and Industries Building are closed for renovation until further notice.

Two new museums are in the works. Congress passed legislation authorizing both in 2020, and planning and fundraising are underway. For more information about the two museums, email info@si.edu, call 202-633-1000, or visit their websites:

- Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum: womenshistory.si.edu
- National Museum of the American Latino: latino.si.edu

From Home
Your adventure doesn’t have to end when you leave Washington, D.C. You can find Smithsonian artifacts, exhibitions, events, and more from your home and community.

- Smithsonian Global (global.si.edu)
- Smithsonian Journeys (smithsonianjourneys.org)
- Smithsonian Magazine (smithsonianmag.com)
- Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service (sites.si.edu)
- Smithsonian Affiliations (affiliates.si.edu)
- Smithsonian Digital Collections (collections.si.edu)

Information in this brochure is valid as of 2023 and is subject to change without notice. Please see si.edu/visit or contact Smithsonian Information to confirm.

Smithsonian Information
Web www.si.edu
Plan Start your visit planning at the Smithsonian’s Virtual Visitor Center at www.si.edu/visit.
Hours Most museums are open daily, except December 25, see www.si.edu/hours for details.
Entry Free, unless otherwise noted.
Contact Us
Phone 202-633-1000 Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
Email info@si.edu

Virtual Visitor Center | si.edu/visit

The Virtual Visitor Center is a digital hub where visitors can learn and explore at their own pace, from anywhere in the world. Online visitors are presented with a variety of trip planning tools to begin designing their ideal visitor experience at the Smithsonian.

My Visit
Create a list of your favorite exhibitions and museums to help you make the most of your time at the Smithsonian.

Virtual Information Desk
Talk with one of our expert volunteers online to discover things to see and do that match your interests.

Castle Stories
Join a Castle docent for a virtual talk and discussion and discover treasured stories from the Castle’s history.

Scavenger Hunts
Explore your favorite Smithsonian museums and gardens with touchless scavenger hunts.

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